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Chat with Rossini.

BY FERDINAND HILLER.

Translated for this Journal from the *Zeitung* of Cologne.

I.—PREFACE.—TROUVILLE SUR MER.

Trouville holds a medium position between a fashionable sea-bathing place and a quiet country residence. Enterprising heads will make of it in time an important harbor; but the sea will have to wet the beach and let it dry again a great many times, before it comes to that. Not a small number of noble French families have made here their retreat, some of them on the very edge of the sea, naturally only for the fine summer months—the autumn calls these much-afflicted ones away to the chase and to their festivities,—and in the winter there is of course no life outside of Paris. The oft-named eighty-six year old Chancellor Pasquier comes here every year, and the saloon of the Countess B., his ancient friend, is perhaps one of the most interesting in France. Wealthy and respectable families from Caen and Lifleux consider Trouville their Campagna, and twice a day the steamer brings in visitors from Havre. A sort of ocean-house, called the Saloon, unites a portion of the bathing guests, especially during the afternoon and evening hours. It is quite pretty, but furnished without great luxury. You find there a great number of French and some English newspapers, a billiard room, a dancing hall, which is used twice a week for balls and keeps the company assembled in the later hours of evening; chambers too, in which music and dancing are taught, but nothing like a restaurant. One pays for the privilege of frequenting the saloon—a necessary arrangement, since in immoral France there are no gambling bells at these watering places. A covered terrace, with the finest prospect toward the sea and Havre,

runs in a crescent round the building, and here is sewing, tattling, whist and domino, reading, smoking, lounging, and all such other useful occupations. Moreover the nearer and remoter environs of Trouville afford opportunity for drives and little excursions of an historical, restorative or natural-historical interest. If one brings with him here an uncertain state of health and a various correspondence, he can spend his time excellent well. * * * * *

But the lion among the guests stopping here was the "swan of Pesaro," GIOACHIMO ROSSINI. For a quarter of a century with the French he has been unconditionally the greatest musical name, and neither his absence from France nor his inactivity have caused any change in that opinion. The so-called musical revolution dates from his arrival in Paris, and in its praise both ultra royalists and Red Republicans unite.—Meanwhile in all lands, where the music of western Europe is cultivated, there is no more widespread name than his, and a more popular opera than the "Barber of Seville" never has existed. With all the love and reverence which we Germans cherish for our own great masters, the most inveterate classicist will not be unjust enough not to recognize the great genius of Rossini; and the objections which we make to him, partly from the national and partly from the ideal standpoint, are very much weakened, if we judge him as an Italian composer compared with his predecessors and countrymen. But it is not the purpose of these lines to follow out such considerations; their design is simply to tell what an extraordinary attention the illustrious man excited here;—an attention in which curiosity and reverence were mingled, and which with all, who came nearer to him, increased to a really affectionate sympathy.—His heart-winning individuality, together with his suffering condition, subdued great and small to him. Persons newly arrived or passing through waited for the moment when they might see him; the settled visitors conversed of nothing more than of him, and if he chanced not to let himself be seen for half a day, they inquired for him with as much interest as they would for the latest news from Sebastopol.

There has been a frightful deal of fabulous report about Rossini's health during the summer. His taking four weeks' time and his own carriage and post-horses, to travel from Florence to Paris, furnished occasion for all sorts of comments. His finding it more than he could bear there, at a time when all Europe was rushing to the French capital, made many actually believe that they had got to give him up. The simple explanation of these eccentricities is, that Rossini's nervous system is much shattered, and that the noise of the locomotive

is as unendurable to him as that which reigned this summer in the streets of Paris. When one has written operas for twenty years continuously, and for five and forty years has been continually worshipped, it is really no wonder if he feels somewhat unstrung. But a nabob, who loses a couple of thousand dollars, remains still a nabob, and so Rossini's mind is what it ever was; his wit, his memory, his communicative vital gifts are unimpaired. Because for twenty years past he has ceased to compose, he has at least given nobody the right to maintain, that his musical genius has waned;—the last work that he wrote was "William Tell."

Rossini is now sixty-three years old. His features are tolerably unchanged. You will hardly see a more intelligent countenance than his, a more finely cut nose, a more eloquent mouth, more expressive eyes and a more noble brow. His physiognomy has the Southern vivacity, really speaking, in joke and in earnest, irresistible in the expression of irony, moody humor, or roguishness. His organ is as agreeable as it is flexible; no South-German can appear more genial to the ear of a North-German, than Rossini, when he wishes. It is the most social nature one can possibly conceive of. I believe he never will grow weary of having men about him, of talking and telling stories and—what is much more meritorious—of listening. In all this he shows that habit of adaptation, which one only finds in Southerners; for children and old people, for noble and for simple he finds always the right word, without altering the style and manner of his deportment. He is just one of those happy natures, in which everything is inborn, and in which all modifications take place of themselves by an organic process. Neither in his music nor his character is there anything violent;—that is what has won so many hearts to both.

The veneration, that was shown to him here, expressed itself in every possible way. At concerts and so forth they always made room for him in the middle seat of the front row; when he seated himself upon the terrace, the most beautiful and elegant ladies gathered about him, and petted him. A high official personage from Caen asked me very seriously for my opinion as to which of the newly laid out streets of Trouville was the fittest to be adorned with the name of Rossini. Truly comical is the story of a tailor, M. Cuiller, who had the honor to make for Rossini a pair of pantaloons. When he brought them home to him, he timidly begged permission to put upon his sign the honorary title: "Tailor to Sig. Rossini." "What in the world?" said the latter; "look at me! I look like a butter merchant. You will ruin your artistic calling, if you do that."

But the tailor would not be diverted, he begged and entreated, the maestro laughed, the tailor was victorious, and the traveller now sees on the main street of Trouville a hanging sign with the inscription:

Coutiller,
TAILLEUR DE MR. G. ROSSINI.

I had been first introduced to Rossini, when as a very young man I came to Paris. There as well as afterwards in Milan I have seen very much of him, and he has everywhere and always shown himself in the highest degree kindly disposed and full of sympathy to me. During the two or three weeks I spent in Trouville, I passed the greatest part of the time in his society. We walked for hours together up and down the little terrace, by the sea-side, and this lounging at the most was interrupted only now and then to take part in a game of Domino. Even in this serious play the conversation hardly ceased, and Rossini was as inexhaustible in his communications, as he was insatiable in his inquiries about facts and persons of whom I could give him any information. Although I only a few times came to the point of making music, owing to the want of a good instrument, yet music and musicians furnished the principal matter of our conversation. Rossini's memory is, as I have before remarked, uncommonly strong; his knowledge of the most various kinds of works and composers much greater than most German musicians would suppose; his judgment from of old has seemed to me sharp, intelligent and impartial; he knows how to enter into everything and be just to all. That he has seen, heard and experienced infinitely much that is interesting, is natural in a career like his. I believe I shall be giving pleasure to many artists and friends of music, if I sketch down upon paper, while it is still floating fresh before me, what has particularly interested me and edified me in the communications of Rossini. I shall be pardoned if I introduce myself, although as little as possible, as a party to the conversation. They were no lectures that the maestro delivered to me; one word gave the other; and the unrestrained, aphoristic, discursive chit-chat I can only render in the same form, unless it is to become an altogether formless medley. For one thing I pledge my word, and that is the main matter, namely that I have put nothing essential of my own invention into the mouth of the maestro.

[To be continued.]

Life of John Sebastian Bach;

WITH A CRITICAL VIEW OF HIS COMPOSITIONS, BY J. N. FÖRCKEL.

(Continued from p. 50.)

CHAPTER V.

There was a peculiarity in the melody of Sebastian Bach, which was owing to the peculiar mode of his treatment of harmony and modulation. Where several concurrent melodies are united, each equally smooth and expressive, none can so predominate as to be distinguished by the hearer apart from the rest. The attention must, as it were, be divided among them, so that sometimes one, sometimes another shall appear the most attractive, though its beauty may seem in some degree obscured by the accompanying parts. I say *seem* to be obscured, because it is not really so, but is rather relieved by them, when the ear is sufficiently experienced to listen to and comprehend the whole in one. There is another reason why Bach's melodies are so strikingly dissimilar to those of other composers, which is this—such a combination of several parts compels the com-

poser to make use of certain turns in each single melody which are not required in single-part composition. No single part need ever force itself into notice, but each must in turn, with art and ingenuity, be made to bend and yield, in order to the harmonious combination of the whole. And this necessity it is, which, by producing these new, singular and before unheard effects, distinguishes Bach's melodies from those of another master. This originality is not calculated to please the taste of the multitude, but will, by the true connoisseur of the art, be reckoned a distinguishing merit, when it does not interfere with the smoothness and flowingness of the composition, and is not suffered to run into extravagance. All Bach's melodies, however, are not of this intricate description. What are called his free compositions, though all bearing the stamp of originality, have melodies so clear, so simple, that, however different to the melodies of other masters, they may be comprehended and appreciated by the most untutored ear. Such are the preludes in his "Well-tempered Clavichord," and most of the pieces in his greater and smaller "Suites." His "Passages" in themselves bear the same stamp of originality as do his melodies. They are at once so new and so varied, so unexpected and so brilliant, such indeed as are not to be found in any other composer. Examples of this kind abound in all his compositions for the clavichord, but are more strikingly distinguishable in the "great variations" in the first part of his "Practice for the Clavichord," in the "English Suites," and in the "Chromatic Fancy." As all passages are made up of dismembered chords, so their richness, newness, and variety must depend on the quality of the materials of which they are composed.

Bach's wonderful talent and judgement in the treatment of harmony and melody is sufficiently illustrated by his successful attempt to compose a melody of such a construction that it could not be harmonized by setting any part to it likewise containing a melody. It was at that time an established rule that every union of parts must make a whole, and use up all the notes necessary to the most complete expression of the contents; that no deficiency should anywhere be felt, which would render another part possible. This rule, till Bach's time, had only been applied to compositions in two, three, or four parts, and that but imperfectly. Bach applied this rule not only to two, three, or four-part compositions, but also extended it to those in a single part; and by this bold attempt produced six solos for the violin, and six others for the violoncello, which are without any accompaniment, and admit of none: for he has in a single part combined all the notes necessary to complete the modulation, so that a second part is neither requisite nor indeed possible. In consequence of these peculiar qualities, Bach's melodies never grow old. Whatever he has intermingled in his earlier works conformable to the taste of the times has grown antiquated; but in his later works, where he has suffered the deep resources of his art to develop themselves unshackled by the dictates of fashion, his melody is as fresh and new as if it were but the creation of yesterday, and this can be said of few compositions equally old. Even the works of Reinhard, Kaiser, and Handel, have grown antiquated sooner than might have been expected, or than the composers themselves would have credited. Composing for the public in general, they were obliged in some degree to comply with the public taste, and nothing is more capricious and variable than popular taste or fashion. Handel's fugues, however, are not yet become antiquated, while few perhaps of his airs would now be found to win the public ear.

To Bach's extraordinary management of harmony and melody was united a very great and varied use of rhythmus. The composers of that period had ample opportunities of acquiring the perfect and easy management of different kinds of rhythm, by what were called the "Suites," which then held the place of our Sonatas. In these pieces there were between the prelude and the concluding jig many very characteristic French dance tunes, in which rhythm was the most important point. Composers were then

obliged to be very well versed in time, measure, and rhythm, and to make use of a great variety of them (now for the most part unknown) in order to give to every dance its proper character and rhythm. In this particular also, Bach far outstrips his predecessors and cotemporaries. He acquired such a mastery in this branch of the art, that he was able to give even to his fugues a rhythm as marked, as easy, and as continuous as if they had been minuets.

The greatness of Bach's genius is shown in his constant and easy application of all the above named means. Whatever the style he chose, his treatment of his subject was always equally simple and felicitous. Nothing appears to have been difficult to him; and he never missed what he aimed at. No one would desire to have a single note other than is written. I will illustrate what I have said by some single instances. C. P. Emanuel in his preface to his father's Psalm tunes for four voices (*Vierstimmige Choralgesänge*) says, the world expected from him none but masterpieces. And this praise is not exaggerated (though some reviewers seem to think so) when it is restricted to the productions of his maturer years. In many species of composition others have written pieces which may compete with his. For instance, there are *Allemandes*, *Courantes*, &c., by Handel and others, which are not less beautiful, if less rich, than those of Bach: but in fugue, and counterpoint, and canon, as relating to it, he stands entirely unrivalled and alone. There never yet was a fugue of any composer that could compare with his; indeed, he who knows not Bach's fugues, knows not what a true fugue is and ought to be. In fugue, in general, there is one set routine. You choose a theme, then put to it a second, gradually transpose both into the keys relating to the first, and make the other parts accompany them through all these transpositions with thorough bass chords. This is a fugue; such a one does not require much labor or art to compose or comprehend; and they who are only acquainted with such can necessarily form but a very poor opinion of the whole species. How different are the fugues of Bach! fulfilling as they do all the conditions which we commonly look for only in free compositions. A characteristic theme, from which is derived an unbroken and distinct melody equally characteristic from beginning to end; the other parts not mere accompaniments, but independent melodies harmonizing throughout with the rest. The whole progressing with perfect freedom, lightness and facility, combining the most perfect purity with the richest variety of modulation; not a superfluous or unnecessary note admitted, and a unity and diversity of style, rhythmus and measure; and, lastly, a vigor infused throughout the whole, that makes it seem to the hearer, or the player, as if every note were indued with life.

These are the excellencies of Bach's fugues—excellencies which excite astonishment and admiration in all who know what intellectual vigor is required for the composition of such works. And should not a work uniting in itself all the various excellencies which are found separately and singly in other works, according to their kinds, excite our especial admiration? But more than all this, though all the productions of Bach's mature years possess in common these distinguishing qualities, all are replete with excellencies of various kinds, yet each fugue has its separate and distinctive character; its own peculiar forms of harmony and melody. To know and play one of Bach's fugues is literally to know and play but *one*, whereas with the fugues of other composers it suffices to comprehend and familiarize the hand with *one*, and you may play and comprehend whole folios. To such powers and to such excellencies do the arts of counterpoint lead when rightly employed, that is to say, employed as Bach employed them. It was by them he learned to develop from a given subject a whole succession of resembling yet different melodies in every kind of taste and figure. Through them he learned not merely to begin but to continue and to end well; and through them he acquired such a knowledge of harmony and its endless transpositions, that he could reverse whole pieces, note by note, in all

their parts, without in the slightest degree impeding the flow of the melody or the correctness of the harmony. Through them he learned to make the most artificial canons in all intervals and in all movements, so light and flowing as entirely to conceal the art employed in their construction, and to make them sound like freer compositions; and finally through them he was enabled to bequeath to posterity a great number and variety of works, which are and will remain models of Art till time shall be no more.

[To be continued.]

ECHO AND SILENCE.

In eddying course when leaves began to fly,
And Autumn in her lap the store to strew,
As mid wild scenes I chanced the muse to woo,
Through glens untrod, and woods that frown'd on high,
Two sleeping nymphs with wonder mute I spy!
And, lo, she's gone! In robe of dark green hue
'Twas Echo from her sister Silence flew,
For quick the hunter's horn resounded to the sky!
In shade affrighted Silence melts away.
Not so her sister—Hark! for onward still,
With far heard step, she takes her listening way,
Bounding from rock to rock and hill to hill.
Ah, mark the merry maid in mockful play,
With thousand mimic tones the laughing forest fill!

Brydges.

A Cantata at short notice.

The following from the Paris correspondence of the New Orleans *Picayune*:

I have been a good deal interested in the account M. Ad. Adam (the well known composer) has given of the history of the cantata he composed for the gratuitous performances of the Opera Comique and Theatre Lyrique in honor of the fall of Sevastopol. They were given at 2 o'clock on Thursday. At noon Wednesday he was at the rehearsal of an opera of one of his friends, when the manager of the Opera Comique sent for him on pressing business. He went at once and found the manager busy sketching scenes and costumes. "I say," said the latter, "Are you a fellow who can give me a cantata on the fall of Sevastopol, to be executed to-morrow at the Opera Comique and Theatre Lyrique?" "Why not?" "Because there is not much time." "Then we must lose none. Where are the words?" "Michael Carré is writing them." "Who will sing them?" "At the Opera Comique, Faure, Jourdan, Bussine and Riquier." "At what time will you be ready?" "It is now 1 o'clock; if I begin at once I shall have finished it by 6 o'clock; but when will it be copied?" "In the evening. We rehearse at the Opera Comique to-night after the performance, and at the Theatre Lyrique at noon to-morrow before the performance, which begins at 2." "All right. I am off for Michael Carré's." "Be in a hurry; I have two scenes and eight costumes to have made—no trifle." M. Adam posted to M. Carré's, expecting to find the cantata ready. He saw a person very much embarrassed, with half a sheet before him. "See here," said he, "I have written a dozen lines for a grand chorus, which will precede the strophes." "What, *malheureux*; twelve lines! a grand chorus! Why, it would take a whole day to write that, two days to copy it, and two days to learn it. I want three or four lines at furthest, and them not too long! I say, an idea strikes me! Take Gretry's *La Victoire est à nous*! which everybody knows, and imitate it at once. Ah! to imitate poetry takes a good deal more time than to write new lines which one may cast in any measure he pleases. Yes, but it is easier learnt; write it at once, I am going to make the arrangements with the copyists of the two theatres, and I shall return in a half hour. I take with me what you have written, and cutting it down by two thirds, and adding to it the words you are going to write on *La Victoire est à nous*! we shall have the first chorus."

M. Adam returned at once to the Opera Comique, reading the words as he went. Before he got to the theatre he had found the measure and

melody of the introduction. He went to the copyist's room and wrote the chorus on detached sheets, which were transcribed as fast as he wrote, that he might carry the rough sketch home with him; he made arrangements with the copyists that they were to come for the MS. score at 6 o'clock, and he returned to Carré's. Here, said the latter are the chorus and the first stanza. Very well, I'm going to set to work; send me the other three as you write them. That's easy enough said, but I have no servant, and don't intend to open my door to anybody. Oh! then I'll call by the theatre and tell them to send you a boy, who will come here every half hour until all has been sent off; he will ring three times and you will open to him. M. Adam then went to the theatre and gave instructions to the servant, and at 3 o'clock sat down at his piano and began to write the first note of the cantata, whose instrumental score consists of not less than twenty pages. It was completed before 8 o'clock. He went at once to the Theatre Lyrique, where he made the actors rehearse their parts. At 10 o'clock he went to the Opera Comique to make the artists there rehearse; Jourdan and Riquier sang that night in *L'Etoile du Nord*, when they were on the stage, he took Faure and Bussine in hand, and quitted them when their comrades left the stage. At midnight all the parts were known; the copyists declared they could not be ready. The leader of the orchestra was sent for, and asked if the orchestra could not rehearse in the morning. Impossible, said he, at 8 o'clock we must rehearse the *Te Deum* at the Conservatoire, and be at Notre Dame at 11 o'clock. Oh! the orchestra can rehearse between the *Te Deum* at the Conservatoire and its execution. Then the chorus had to commit their parts to memory, and they were not crammed before 1 o'clock at night. After all these labors M. Adam went home to bed, but he could not sleep a single instant. At 10 o'clock A. M. he was at the Opera Comique; the orchestra were at their posts, but the singers had not come; the rehearsal took place without them, and the faults of MSS. were corrected at once; then the *mise en scène* took place without the singers who were at Notre Dame. At noon, he rehearsed the same *mise en scène* at the Theatre Lyrique; the chorus had received their parts only that morning, and they were obliged to learn them before thinking of making the orchestra rehearse—here a new difficulty presented itself: the performance would commence in half an hour, and the entrance to the theatre was so encumbered by the throng anxious to obtain places, the musicians could not get up at the door; police and soldiers had to be sent for to open a passage to some of them, and besides, all the wind instruments were out with the National Guard. All these difficulties were overcome, and the cantata had great success. This glimpse behind the curtain exhibits to you one scene of the fevered life of Paris, which wears and tears body and mind in a frightful way. They say all literary men, and composers here die of ossification of the heart, or softening of the brain; can it be wondered at?

Diary Abroad.—No. 26.

BERLIN, OCT. 27.—The *Tribune* brings me nearly four columns upon BRISTOW's opera. Nobody can hope that it is a success more heartily than I, but this article I must read with a running commentary.

"Operas with spoken dialogue are termed comic, to distinguish them from grand operas."

Hem! Hem! Hem! So *Fidelio* is a comic opera!

"At the first go off we have some masterly modulations of the school in which VOGLER inducted WEBER and MEYERBEER, and which MOZART denounced."

When did Mozart denounce the school into which Vogler inducted Weber and Meyerbeer? Vogler's school was that of Padre MARTINI and Padre VALOTTI.

I suppose the above assertion rests upon this:—When Mozart was about twenty-two years of age he was in Mannheim, where he found Vogler holding the offices of court chaplain and vice kapellmeister. At this time Mozart, writing home to his father, reports a *Miserere*, composed by Vogler, "which every one tells me is perfectly

intolerable to listen to, the harmony being all wrong." As every one who makes any pretension to musical knowledge has—or should be ashamed of himself if he has not—Holmes's Life of Mozart, I will simply refer to that book, (Harper's Edition), pages 122 and 124, for Mozart's estimate of Vogler. Now who was this Vogler? A young man of twenty-eight years, who accomplished no fame until long years after this period, when he had the works of MOZART and HAYDN as models.

The above 'fling' at Mozart is just as contemptible as it would be if HANDEL's opinion of an early work by GLUCK, long since forgotten, had been introduced for the purpose of insinuating that Handel condemned the 'Orpheus,' 'Alceste' or 'Iphigenia.'

"That [the drinking song] of 'Don Giovanni' has not a single bibulous or rollicking element to commend it."

Let expressive silence speak the praise of that assertion! The world has had many great inventors and discoverers, but the *Tribune* surpasses them all. It is a fortunate thing for a musical man to live in the age of that sheet which so ably sweeps away the world for sixty odd years back.

"Even on the continent of Europe, where every musical city has its firmly established opera house, in which native singers give habitually works in the native language—besides its Italian opera house, wherein the, &c., &c."

"Besides its Italian opera"—false, Mr. *Tribune*, utterly false. Here are some of the musical cities of the continent which have not their Italian opera house. Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Antwerp, Cologne, Mayence, Frankfurt, Strasburg, Cassel, Hanover, Leipsic, Dresden, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Munich, Augsburg, Stuttgart, Weimar, Bremen, Hamburg. Italian opera has for 150 years been ruining successive managers in London, and lives in Paris and St. Petersburg only by direct government assistance, and has died out (in the Italian language) everywhere else.

"Even there [on the continent of Europe], the young composer who, after years of laborious studies to qualify him for the task, has finally achieved it and holds his first opera written and ready for the stage, finds that his toils and trials have not even commenced."

The *Tribune* sees all Europe within the walls of Paris—or rather it can never see beyond those walls—it is a most rare thing that that paper has a musical article in which any allusion is made to opera out of Paris, that has not a blunder or two in it. Now no one will dispute the *Tribune*, if it avers that the Grand Opera at Paris is a Canaan into which an unknown, and especially an American composer can hardly penetrate; but when the averment is extended to every principal city on the Continent—pshaw, it is perfectly ridiculous!

Here is a report of the Royal Opera in Berlin for the year 1847, lying before me. In that one year were produced:

"Condemnation of Faust," by BERLIOZ. Damned.
"William of Orange," by CARL ECKERT. Semi-d.m.d.
"The Pretender," by KUCKEN. Damned.
"Zaire," Anonymous. Damned.
"Just Right," by SCHAFFE. Damned.
"Anette," O. THEISEN. Semi-damned.
"Rienzi," WAGNER. Damned.

In spite of the ill success of that year, during the next were produced:

"Martha," by FLOTOW. Successful.
"Diamond Cross," by SALOMON. Disappeared at once.
"Rothmantel," by R. WUERST. ditto.

Besides these I find in the year 1849 the following works of, at that time, young or unknown composers introduced to the public of Germany: "Gitana," by BALFE, at Hamburg; "The Two Princes," by ESSER, at Berlin; "Forester," by FLOTOW, at Hamburg; "Guttenberg," by FACHS, Hamburg; "Couradin," by HILLER, at Dresden; "Brant von Kynart," by LITOLF, at Brunswick; "Waffenschmidt," by LORTZING, at Dresden; "Undine," Lortzing, at Frankfurt; "Grand Admiral," Lortzing, at Leipsic; "Prince Eugene," GUSTAVUS SCHMIDT, Frankfurt; "Girl from the Country," by SUPPE, at Vienna.

Of course there is no golden road by which the composer can walk at once to fame; but that the *Tribune*'s Paris experience is to be considered conclusive as to the prospects of a young composer all over the continent, is nonsense.

"The early struggles of MEYERBEER and VERDI are

but the type of those of nearly every composer who has achieved renown through the opera houses of Continental Europe."

Let us look a moment at this Meyerbeer business. On the day he was admitted member of the Berlin Sing Akademie as alto singer, that society sang a psalm of his composition. Before he was twenty a cantata, "God and Nature," by him was produced by the same association. His first opera, "Jephtha," which Weber said had extraordinary beautiful pieces, written in a thoroughly German and regular form, was produced about the same time in Munich, without success. In his 23d year his "Two Caliphs" was damned both in Stuttgart and Vienna. Three years later his "*Romilda e Costanza*," written in the Rossini style, met with a brilliant but short lived success at Padua. "Margaret of Anjou," and "Emma of Roxburg" followed and gained applause, on several Italian Theatres. The latter he produced at Berlin, and it was most unequivocally damned, though the opera house was filled with his friends and connections. Did any reader ever hear of Meyerbeer's "Exile of Granada?" That is another of his works at that period—produced at Milan in the winter of 1821-2. Another forgotten work was the "Semiramis," which was written for the Court Theatre in Turin about 1820. Then came "*Il Crociato d'Egitto*," which succeeded in Italy and Paris—and was damned generally elsewhere. In Berlin the Royal Opera had lost too much money by his previous attempts, and would not touch it. The Königstadisches Theatre of that city took it up in 1832, and ran it some six or seven times, since which it has disappeared entirely. Then came "Roland the Devil"—he *did* have to buy its performance, that is true, and any manager, who would risk the enormous expense of putting such a work upon the stage,—the production of a man who had been so many times weighed and found wanting, would be a fool. It succeeded because Rossini, to win a bet, appeared at the grand rehearsal and applauded one or two numbers.

"The early struggles of Meyerbeer"—bah!

"In the production of Oratorios and Symphonies he [the English or American composer] encounters peculiar obstacles." Here follow two extracts from the London *Athenaeum*. I agree with the first one freely. If I subscribe to a Singing Society without knowing before-hand that it will produce works not yet stamped as good, or to a Philharmonic Society with the expectation of hearing established Symphonies, and they palm off trash upon me for my money, I shall look out next time about subscribing.

It is the custom here for young composers to have a hearing thus: some society gives its gratuitous services for the vocal parts, an orchestra is hired, and the new oratorio is sung in a church, the proceeds being devoted to a charity. I have suffered the affliction of two such oratorios this month. But none of the established societies think of cheating their subscribers by taking their money and using it for the benefit of a young 'struggling' composer. And this I think is right. Symphonies get a hearing at Festivals where two or three of the best offered are tried and the best gets a prize. So GADE made himself known. I have heard some four or five such works—for after a work of this kind gets a prize, LIEBIG 'sandwiches' it between a Beethoven and a Haydn work, and we listen to the one for the sake of getting the others. Liebig sometimes gives us symphonies, which have not had prizes. Nobody thinks of demanding the productions of fledglings at our Royal Orchestra soirées, or at the Sing Akademie—and I hope for one that the New-York Philharmonic will always remain as exclusive as it is now—and in fact cut off what trash still gets into its programmes. Stop; let us go a little more at length into this matter, taking the articles copied by the *Tribune* as our text.

First, a correspondent of the *Athenaeum* complains that as a subscriber to a series of concerts—his money being paid for the *quid pro quo* of works by Handel, Haydn, and Mendelssohn, whose excellence he knew—he was cheated by having served upon him a music of which he knew nothing, and which he did not wish to hear. Now unless the "Sacred Harmonic Society," which is for the purpose of producing standard oratorios, gives notice beforehand to the public that they shall also give such and such untitled works, so that the public may subscribe knowingly, it is a fraud. If I subscribe to the four concerts of a society for instrumental performances, which

advertises that it will give four symphonies in the four concerts composed by masters of established reputation—or in other words "classical works"—and I am put off with the composition of some new man, I am cheated, and will not subscribe next time unless they give me a list of the works to be given. And yet I will pay not only as much but even more to another series of concerts, at each of which a new book shall be given, for the sake of bringing out talent. The *Athenaeum's* correspondent was right in spite of CHORLEY, and of the *Tribune*.

The Sing Akademie here, and the Boston Handel and Haydn Society are honest and honorable in this respect.

Secondly. So long as the press of London and New-York are unanimous in damning with faint praise every thing that is not BELLINI, DONIZETTI, and so on, and make all their criticisms (!) little more than puffs of this, that and the other singer, male and female, and so long as opera is only a *something* depending upon stars at enormous prices, who sing in an unknown tongue, so long must it continue an aristocratic affair, ruining managers as it has now done in London for 150 years, and never getting down to the real public. And so long as this is so, so long will it remain the height of folly for managers to spend \$20,000 to 30,000 in bringing out new and unknown works, except in case of men who have given in some way proofs that they have genius and talent. The Paris Opera was perfectly right in refusing "Robert the Devil;" and so was that in London in refusing Smart's, or Fry's works.

Thirdly. The reference to the case of the painter who has but to hang up his picture to be seen and judged, tells on the other side—on my side. Just see. A paints a picture, B composes an opera; A invites his friends to see it in his studio, B invites his friends to his rooms to hear his work. Now unless A can find means of exposing his picture in public, he cannot sell it, as a general thing, that is if it be a large work—if it be in painting what an opera is in music. So artists and friends of artists found a society and collect funds for an exhibition, where the work is to be seen. To see it the public pays money. So A gets fame, and then his pictures sell. A's picture is not bought at a high price and put into the Boston Athenaeum, or any permanent gallery—nothing of the sort. It is not the business of the great galleries any where in the world to buy the works of unknown men, nor do they do it. Make the application yourself to B's opera, which he wishes to publish and sell.

Fourthly. Let the musical artists do as the pictorial artists have done. Let them form a good chorus and orchestra, get good masters of scenic effects, (painters, &c.) employ some of the fine American singers and song-stresses, and then give a series of operas like Cherubini's 'Water Carrier,' Weigl's 'Swiss family,' Bellini's 'Sonnambula,' Storace's 'Iron Chest,' and at reasonable prices, and it would not be long before an audience would be formed to whom two or three American operas might be annually presented. But do not find fault if the Grand Opera at Paris, or the Italian Opera in London, is unwilling to risk 'Robert the Devil,' Fry's 'Leonora,' or Smart's 'Berta.'

"The first opera by an American was *Leonora*." "It was a grand opera in the technical sense of the term—that is, without spoken dialogue."

So *Leonora* had all her woes to relate in recitative. Now the recitatives in this opera may be the best ever made—that is not what I am going to touch upon. I am simply going to say that nearly all the recitative I ever heard is the most intolerable bore—if in a language I can understand. If it is in Italian it makes no difference whether the dialogue is spoken or recited, as I am engaged at the time in studying the text book to find out what it is all about, though recitative has this advantage, that it gives me more time for study. But the moment recitative upon the stage (except in cases where it is fully accompanied and is in close connection with airs as in Gluck, Mozart, Weber and Beethoven, as here performed) takes the dialogue in English or German, my thermometer sinks to zero. Now, look here.

Every language has its peculiar rising and falling inflexions of the voice, its peculiar accents and means of strong expression through the tones in which the words are spoken. Porter gives a single question in which the accent, as it falls upon each word in succession, changes the nature of the answer which must follow.

Do you ride to town to-day? No, Mr. Brown.

Do you ride to town to-day? No, I walk.
Do you ride to town to-day? No, away from it.
Do you ride to town to-day? No, over to Dover.
Do you ride to town to-day? No, to-morrow.
Do you ride to town to-day? Yes, spite of the cholera.
Put No. 5 into German.
Ride you, to-day, to town?

Suppose you translate a *Grand* opera from the German into English, and you see at once that the recitative meant for No. 5 will give the expression of No. 2. Now this is ten times more when you translate from Italian. What is true of translations is equally true of recitatives written to German or English words upon the Italian model. It requires the very finest ear to detect the inflexions of spoken sentences, so as to give them in music. Purcell and Handel set English words to English recitative. Such recitatives are to us what Italian recitatives are to Italians. I feel continually the disagreeable—disagreeable? the abominable sensation of hearing German words and sentences recited to Italian inflexions. Nearly all the recitative I hear both in English and German produces about the same effect as it would to hear a broad Scotchman, a London Cockney, or a wild Irishman, declaiming Shakespeare. Now I never heard a single recitative in *Leonora*—nor can I avow that every one is not a hundred fold better than any Purcell or Handel ever composed;—but if they are nothing but imitations of the Italian inflexions and cadences—if they are all cut out after the regular pattern—they must be enough, unless the other music is superlative in its excellence—to damn the thing forever.

In conclusion, I know not whether I shall have the greater pleasure in hearing that the next attempt at establishing an Italian Opera after the manner of London and St. Petersburg in New York has broken down, or in hearing that "Rip van Winkle's" success is preparing the way for something rational. I hope, however, that Italian Opera performed by enormously expensive troupes will be at length completely crushed out, as it is in nearly all the cities of the continent of Europe—spite of the *Tribune's* assertion—and that opera in the native language will take its place.

Musical Correspondence.

NEW YORK, Nov. 19.—Our festival days have commenced, and were worthily introduced on Saturday night by the first "Classical Soirée" of Mr. EISEL. You will observe that the "Quartette" is left out, as the *entrepreneur* (it wouldn't do to say *undertaker*, would it?) proposes to introduce some quintets among the quartets this winter, for which purpose Mr. JOSEPH BURKE has promised his valuable aid. The first step towards carrying out this plan was made the other evening by the performance of MOZART's Quintet in G minor, which closed the concert. We here in New York have never heard it before, and now certainly heard it to advantage, for it was very well played. How fresh, sparkling, and lovely it is, now reminding one a little of its brethren, as for instance of its namesake, the G minor Symphony, and then almost attaining to the loftier spirit of BEETHOVEN's earlier works. The remaining instrumental pieces were CHOPIN's Trio, op. 8, with LOFFMANN at the piano, and Quartet Concertante, op. 12, of MENDELSSOHN. The gem of the latter, which, as a whole, did not altogether please me, is the charming Canzonetta, which we have heard on previous occasions, and always with great delight. But this time it was not played with very much spirit, and failed to elicit, as always before, a unanimous encore. I am sorry to say that in this number, as well as in the Trio, we were disturbed by that harshness and out-of-tune playing of the first violin, which was so frequently complained of by my predecessor of last winter. It is unfortunate that Mr. NOLL cannot learn to remedy this, almost his only fault, for, apart from this, there is so much character and vigor in his playing, that he could easily attain the highest rank among our resident violinists. As it was, every one felt it a relief to

hear Burke's sweet, clear tones take the lead in the quintet. Yet Burke, on the other hand, lacks much that Noll possesses—the two would just complete each other;—pity that we cannot blend them into one.

Hoffmann continues to gain a firmer footing, in the esteem of the "appreciative few" with every appearance in public. His playing is really wonderful. Such vigor, such flexibility of finger, yet marvelous accuracy, such a calm, easy, and yet dignified demeanor at this instrument, it is seldom our good fortune to observe. His earnest striving to render himself a true interpreter of Chopin, whom so few can interpret, deserves the success which crowns it, is worthy of the highest praise. And that he is by no means one-sided, or entirely absorbed in this one composer and his peculiar style, to the detriment of his comprehension of others, was amply proved by the masterly manner in which he rendered Beethoven's "Kreuzer" Sonata last winter. I must not omit to mention that, with the exception of the above mentioned defect in the violin, Mr. Hoffmann was very ably supported in the Trio. This composition did not appear to me as characteristic of Chopin as his latter works. It smacked a little, a very little, of KALKBRENNER. This does not apply, however, to the Scherzo, which was wild, stormy, restless Chopin throughout—not hardly to the commencement of the finale. The Adagio disappointed me; it was entirely devoid of that deeply romantic spirit which pervades all the composer's similar compositions, and was decidedly uninteresting.

The singing I regret to say, was, as is too often the case in these entertainments, the weakest part. Mrs. BRINCKERHOFF, whose voice is quite fine in its upper notes, but who sings too much from her palate and has very little school, rendered WEBER'S "Und ob die Wolke," with tolerable precision and feeling; but gave us, for her first piece, a most common-place song: "The Tear." Why choose this song, when there were so many of MENDELSSOHN'S or SCHUBERT'S, to say nothing of other composers, to choose from? Whose the fault?

PHILADELPHIA, NOV. 9.—Do not start when I tell you that the Union is dissolved! for I mean the Musical Union. There were three; an agreeable tetra-chord, but it was soon found that there was a *superfluous third* that disturbed their harmony; therefore the three became two at the expense of the Composer of "Kathleen Mavourneen." Yes, the sad truth is that the C. K. M. has accepted an invitation to retire into private life, and that the remaining concerts will be given by Ireland and Germany, in other words by Messrs THUNDER and ROHR, who announce the *Stabat Mater* of ROSSINI for the eleventh of December.

The Twelfth Mass was sung on the 13th inst. at Concert Hall, previous to the breaking up of the Union, and was listened to by a good audience. A few flower pots in front of the organ, apologized for the absence of the screen, and stood as a sign-board for the amateurs who sang the solos, so I am tongue-tied for the second time; I flattered myself that the horticultural show was for the purpose of shutting 'Veritas' up. I am very willing to praise, where praise is deserved, and am ready to praise the performance of the Mass, sincerely. The piece worst sung was the only one honored with an encore,—the fugue: *Cum Sancto Spiritu*; it was fairly done on the repeat, but was bad at first, the middle portion being weak and confused; it was taken too slowly by the conductor, Mr. Rohr. The *Benedictus* was sung complete; it is always curtailed in the Catholic church, as it is too long for the service at the altar. The chorus sang with correctness and in tune, but now and then the time was neglected. The distinctness with which the words could be heard, was some-

thing new in a chorus performance. It was an error not to repeat the Mass, as it drew a better house than "Joseph" did, either night, and pleased more generally.

The *Stabat Mater* is to be given at the Musical Fund Hall with orchestra, to ensure a full attendance. No announcement has been made by the Harmonia for that Society's next concert, and so, I suppose, it will be one of their old fashioned miscellaneous concerts, one half sacred, and one half secular,—for this, read opera.

GOTTSCALK played on Thursday night for a concert given by J. S. BLACK, formerly an agent of the New York Musical World, and was warmly applauded in his different pieces. He is the best pianist of the hammer-and-tongs school since DE MEYER. The vocalists at this concert, were from New York; perhaps, as they were volunteers, they should not be criticized, so I will only say that they were both very indifferent. Mr. Black, who is a bass singer himself, did not perform, but rolled the pianos about, and made himself useful in that way. The room was good; at least two thirds filled.

The next musical treat is to be a classical soirée at the Assembly Buildings, given by one of our oldest professors, Mr. CHARLES HUFFELD, for the improvement of his pupils. It is the first of a subscription series.

COLLINS was here last week at Concert Hall, with his company of singers; success only moderate. The Pyne troupe has postponed its visit until the 29th. Miss LOUISA PYNE has many warm friends here, and admirers by the thousand.

VERITAS.

Dwight's Journal of Music.

BOSTON, NOV. 24, 1855.

Handel's "Solomon."

[Concluded.]

The Second Part begins and ends with a grand chorus, the first of which (*From the censor, &c.*) we have already noticed. All between is dramatic, a, for this day at least, somewhat tedious stretch of recitative, song, trio and duet. Solomon, in a page of recitative, ascribes the praise of wisdom, which has just been sung to him, to God, and "bows enraptured to the King of Kings," alluding also to some of his stern acts of justice. This leads in a lovely song of praise, perhaps the best of all the airs in the part of Solomon, a flowing Larghetto, in G minor, with a mellow sunset tone of quiet, blissful, thankful feeling:

When the sun o'er yonder hills,
Pours in tides the golden day,
Or when quiv'ring o'er the rills
In the West he dies away—
He shall ever hear me sing
Praises to th' eternal King.

The triplets into which the three-four melody divides as he rapturously repeats "he shall ever, ever hear me sing," are full of fervor and of beauty. This pious resolution is commended by a Levite, who intervenes here for the first time, and after a brief recitative, sings a spirited bass air (Nos. 26-7), in A minor, common time, quite a patriotic sounding melody, to the words:

Thrice blest that wise, discerning king,
Who can each passion tame;
And mounts on virtue's eagle wing,
To everlasting fame.
Such shall a mighty pattern stand
To ages yet unborn;
To honor prompt each distant land,
And future times adorn.

You will readily imagine that Handel's melody does "mount on eagle wing," and that this bass

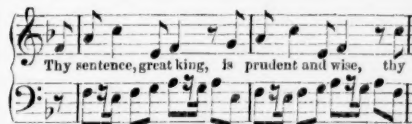
voice vigorously scales up through its whole compass, from its lowest depth, to reach those heights of "everlasting fame," and that there are plenty of old-fashioned, long-spun *roulades*, when the word "everlasting" last occurs. The only fault of the song is its length, which would not be felt, however, were it the only song, since the development of the melody is really interesting and not a monotonous protracting of one thought. With richer accompaniment it would be highly effective.

No. 28 opens the long dramatic scene of the two women claiming the same infant. Ushered in by an attendant (tenor recitative, here given to Zadoc), the first, the real mother recites her wrong. Song after this would seem unnecessary, but Handel has improved the situation to introduce a lengthy Trio, (No. 29), in which the first woman begins to plead, with simple pathos, and as she grows more earnest, repeating: "*my cause is just, be thou my friend, she is cut short by the second woman: False is all her melting tale, in a vixen and accusing strain; these two characteristically distinct melodies are then mingled and alternated piecemeal, while Justice holds the lifted scale, in a long-drawn note, now on the key-note (A), and now on the dominant, in the low baritone of Solomon, who simply reiterates these words, by way of fundamental bass, as it were, to the Trio.*"

No. 30. Recitative. After hearing the second claimant, Solomon pronounces judgment: *Divide the babe.* And then breaks in the strangest air—more strange than interesting, though there is no telling what a great dramatic singer might make of it,—in which the second woman exults after the following amiable and motherly manner:

Thy sentence, great king, is prudent and wise,
And my hopes, on the wing, bound quick for the prize;
Contented I hear and approve the decree,
For at least I shall tear the lov'd infant from thee!

The sneering, syncopated melody, choking as it were with hate, and always with contrary accent to the bass accompaniment, has reference, we suppose, to the amiable state of mind of the singer; but it wants more instrumental background, and a little of that *tigress* stinging tone and action of RACHEL to render it effective. Here are the first notes, which we give as a curiosity; the words are to the king, but the music, the real meaning of them, is addressed to the other woman:



Quite in contrast with this is the air of the real mother, who hereby proves herself such, singing (to odd words enough), after springing forward to "withhold the executing hand":

Can I see my infant go'd
With the fierce, relentless sword?
Can I see him yield his breath,
Smiling at the hand of death;
And behold the purple tides
Gushing down his tender sides?
Rather be my hopes beguiled,
Take thou all, but spare my child.

It is really a song of great dramatic capabilities, and the closing phrases: *spare my child*, may be conceived of being sung so as to be full of pathos. No. 34, a recitative by Solomon, is of course necessary to set all right again, by giving virtue its reward. And by this time we may fancy that our audience has got pretty well weary of so long a stretch of solos, all so much after the old Italian

cut, and destitute of all the stimulating richness of the modern orchestration. The truth is, this old melody, (that is the average of it, sung by average voices), though one may find meaning and character in it all, has a monotony to most ears, about as great as that experienced in reading those old conventional classic dramas of Corneille and Racine,—not that these are for a moment to be mentioned in the scale of greatness with a genius like our Handel. They need some rare Rachel of a singer to create them anew and bring out their meaning. The beautiful songs of the "Messiah" and some others are more agreeable, or have become so by frequent hearing, and through great singers. Besides they are incomparably finer. The songs of "Solomon" are by no means the best of Handel. It is the choruses which save the work; the life of it resides in them. Massive, elaborate and complex as they are, nobody fails to understand them, nobody listens to them with a vacant mind. The charm of personality, which makes solos and duets so popular, is outworn in these songs, and we await each chorus like refreshing rain in drought.

Our Handel and Haydn Society therefore do well to omit Nos. 35-40, including: a duet between Solomon and the mother; a chorus: *From the east unto the west, who so wise as Solomon?*; an aria in *extenso* for tenor, in which Zadoc, in such majestic, florid melody as you can fancy, compares Solomon to "the tall palm, its towering branches curling spread;" and a simple pastoral air by the first woman, about how: *Every shepherd sings his maid, Beneath the vine or fig-tree's shade*, which would seem more in place in one of his early love operas; and come directly to the chorus closing the Second Part:

Swell, swell the full chorus to Solomon's praise,
Record him, ye bards, as the pride of our days—
Flow sweetly the numbers that dwell in his name,
And rouse the whole nation in songs to his fame.

This chorus, like the opening one of this part, is in D major. Allegro, 6-4 measure; bold, triumphal, in plain harmony, without fugue, but full of grandeur. The last lines: *Flow sweetly, &c.*, make a smoother episode, in 3-4 measure, with a running violin accompaniment, which soon imparts its movement to the bass voices, afterwards responded to by other voices, and after this smooth, gentle sprinkling of harmony, the bolder original movement returns.

Part III opens with an instrumental Symphony, of some length, in broad even-flowing 4-4 rhythm, without fugue, full and strong and joyous, with the usual Handelian quavering figures for the violins, strong up-buoying basses, relieved at intervals by bits of pastoral duet, in reedy thirds, by the hautboys. This by way of prelude to the visit of the Queen of Sheba. Recitative No. 43.

Queen.—From Arabia's spicy shores,
Bounded by the hoary main,
Sheba's queen these seats explores,
To be taught thy heavenly strain—

Solomon.—Thrice welcome Queen! with open arms
Our court receives thee and thy charms.
The temple of the Lord first meets your eyes,
Rich with the well accepted sacrifice;
Here all our treasure free behold,
Where cedars lie o'erwrought with gold;
Next view a mansion fit for kings to own
Surnamed the forest of high Lebanon;
Where Art her utmost skill displays,
And every object claims your praise.

AIR. [No. 44.]

Queen.—Every sight these eyes behold,
Does a different charm unfold;
Flashing gems and sculptured gold,
Still attract my ravished sight—

But to hear fair truth distilling
In expression choice and thrilling
From that tongue so soft and thrilling,—
That my soul does most delight.

The "choice expression" of those last four lines is pruned away in our performance. For shortness the first part only of the melody, which is in G minor, and of not a little beauty, is sung without the major strain before the conclusion. And now comes one of the most interesting portions of the Oratorio:

Nos. 45-51. The monarch calls upon his court musicians to

Sweep, sweep the string, to sooth the royal fair,
And rouse each passion with th'alternate air.

And then follow a series of four choruses, of contrasted expression, illustrating the power of music in rousing or soothing the various passions. First a sweetly, richly flowing one in G, 3-8 time, the theme being first sung as solo by Solomon:

Music, spread thy voice around,
Sweetly flow the lulling sound.

Then he sings:

Now a different measure try,
Shake the dome and pierce the sky,
Rouse us next to martial deeds,
Clanging arms and neighing steeds
Seem in fury to oppose,
Now the hard fought battle glows.

Which words are immediately taken up in double chorus, with the same martial accompaniment, in D of course. The full chords have the quick and stately tramp of armies. At the idea of the "hard-fought battle" and the "clanging arms and neighing steeds," the instrumental masses echo each other with more animation, and the voice-parts tread upon each other's heels in uttering the same strong phrases, till the mind is filled with a bewildering yet harmonious image of general onslaught and confusion. The trumpets of course are not idle. The third is one of the finest and most impressive of Handel's choruses, although a short one. We quit the general battle for the sorrows of the private breast. The words are:

Draw the tear from hopeless love,
Lengthen out the solemn air,
Full of death and wild despair.

It is in G minor, a Largo movement, for five voices (there being two sopranos), and as these roll in like wave upon wave at first, you are reminded somewhat of *Behold the Lamb* in the "Messiah." The union of all the voices on the tonic chord at *Lengthen out the solemn air*, with the long swell on the word *air*, is sublime, and the abrupt modulations, diminished sevenths, &c., at *Full of death and wild despair*, have the romantic character of modern music, and almost make one shudder.—Finally, "to release the tortured soul," we have the air and chorus, in E flat:

Thus rolling surges rise
And plough the troubled main,
But soon the tempest dies
And all is calm again.

Also a chorus for five voices, in one or another of which the rolling surge continually resounds with right hearty Handelian gusto.

No. 52-3. Recitative by the Queen of Sheba: *Thy harmony's divine, great king*, and so on, in admiring strain, whereat the Levite, like Chorus in Greek tragedies, chimes in with another bass air, in admiration of both. *Pious king and virtuous queen*,—an air after the usual pattern, now quavering through several bars on the first syllable of *glory*, and now holding it at even height for the same space.

No. 54. Recitative and Air for tenor. Zadoc celebrates the splendors of the temple, and sings

a melody ingeniously wedded to the following words, with instrumental figures corresponding:

Golden columns fair and bright,
Catch the mortals' ravish'd sight;
Round their sides ambitions twine,
Tendrils of the clasping vine.
Cherubim stand there displayed,
O'er the ark their wings are laid;
Every object swells with state,
All is pious, all is great.

No. 56 is another double chorus, in D, of the most magnificent character: *Praise the Lord with harp and tongue*, which might close the whole, sublimely enough, and without any sacrifice of unity or completeness of the subject. But Handel, writing for Englishmen, famous for strong stomachs and long programmes, must give heaped measure, and so Solomon must sing of "green pastures" and all the outward signs of his most blessed and prosperous reign, which we omit, together with the recitative, which should be very popular: *Gold now is common!* and the Queen must pray that peace may ever dwell in Salem, and sing a slow and florid air, with *obligato* flute and otherwise elaborate accompaniment:

Will the sun forget to streak
Eastern skies with amber ray?
When the dusky shades do break,
He unbars the gates of day,
Then demand if Sheba's queen
E'er can banish from her thought
All the splendor she has seen,
All the knowledge thou hast taught.

There is leave-taking, too, and a duet between Solomon and Sheba, which we omit, and now we have really reached the finale in the double chorus:

The name of the wicked shall quickly be past,
But the fame of the just shall eternally last.

A chorus which by no means caps the climax upon the preceding choruses, but is in fact less interesting than most of them, although there is something quite impressive in those little short ejaculations, with pauses between, of the syllables "shall quickly"—"be past." Another good reason for terminating the oratorio with the preceding grander chorus, No. 56.

As a whole we may speak of "Solomon" as an oratorio which contains much of Handel's best music, but too long, wanting in unity, and unusually overloaded with long level stretches of those conventional and ornate solos, which it requires the best of singers to lift into light and interest. The choruses are indeed wonderfully fine, and touch such various chords of human feeling, that they might furnish a complete enough entertainment of themselves. The oratorio as here given is curtailed one third. Why not curtail it still more? Why not abandon its dramatic plan entirely, and retaining only a few of the best solos, just enough to connect the choruses together, or rather to separate the mountains by valleys, reduce it to enjoyable proportions? Handel is himself in choruses, unlike, beyond all others; not always so in his songs. The fashion of their day, which is dross, cleaves to them; and though there be rich ore in the mass of them, it can hardly be apparent to the general listener, at least through uninspired interpreters.

CONCERTS.

I. HANDEL AND HAYDN SOCIETY. The first performance of "Solomon" last Sunday evening was certainly a success, save that the oratorio proved too long—a fault which will be remedied, we understand, to-morrow night, by a still further reduction of the recitatives and airs. Having spoken at such length of the piece itself, we must be brief respecting the performance. The audience nearly filled the Music Hall, the chorus seats were full—over two hundred singers,—the orchestra on the scale of four first and four second violins; and as the conductor, ZEE RAHN, took the stand, after a fine organ voluntary by

MUELLER, there was a general look of eager expectation.

The overture was played extremely well, and indeed all the accompaniments were as effective as they well could be without the addition of modern instrumentation. The choruses were sung with precision, fair balance of parts, rich and full ensemble of tone, and plenty of spirit, bearing ample testimony to Mr. Zerrahn's thorough training. The more grand and splendid choruses especially, were well done, and the answers in the fugue parts taken up promptly and distinctly. There was room, however, for more light and shade. In that Nightingale chorus the *pianissimo* should have predominated; the words suggested it, and there was opportunity for the finest of choral effects, a broad mass of sound of many voices subdued to a whisper. Considering, too, the loudness and grandeur of most of the other choruses, it would have furnished contrast and relief.

Turning to the solos, the parts of the two queens were taken by Mrs. LEACH (late Mrs. GEORGINA STUART), a favorite soprano in the concerts of New York. She has a silvery, even, flexible voice of large compass, without any very decided character of tone, but sweet and musical, and cultivated to a very clear and easy execution of the florid, trying melody of Handel. Mrs. REED and Mrs. HILL represented the two women. The former has an agreeable, penetrating soprano, and sang the music with some feeling, but with a tendency to drag, which made what should be pathos seem sometimes like feeble sentimentality. Mrs. HILL has improved since we heard her last, and rendered her part truly and effectively, considering the rather ungracious character of the music. This was still more to be considered with regard to the solos for male voices. Mr. G. W. PRATT, our young townsman, recently from Leipsic, took the part of Solomon. He has a strong baritone, particularly rich and telling in its upper notes, and despite a little hardness and heaviness in the carriage of his tone, delivers his music in a correct, well sustained, clear manner. He has the great virtue of distinct articulation, and has studied well the art of recitative, though he might learn a grace or two, of lightness, elasticity and delicacy, from two such tasteful singers of the English school as Mr. LEACH and Mr. ARTHURSON. The former, new to us here, sang the two airs in the character of the Levite, with admirable taste and finished style. His bass is not ponderous, but musical and clear and flexible. Of Mr. ARTHURSON, as Zadock, there is scarcely need to speak. He is the model, among our present singers, in the delivery of Handel's music, especially the recitative. Style and expression make up for any want of power in his singularly sweet and musical tenor. He touches those old melodic forms and phrases, and at once they lose their sameness, and acquire the electric delicacy of life. In a succession of such solos it is commonly a relief when his turn comes. In his singing you could see the "columns fair and bright."

II. MENDELSSOHN QUINTETTE CLUB.—The first Chamber Concert, Tuesday evening, was an auspicious opening of the *seventh season*. It has really got to be an institution with us. The night was fair; the audience large and eager and appreciative; the Chickering saloon pleasant as ever; the Club (let us name them all: AUGUST FRIES, CARL MEISEL, GUSTAV KREBS, THOMAS RYAN and WULF FRIES,) in good spirits, well prepared; the programme fine and just long enough, to wit:

- PART I.**
1. Quartet in G, No. 1, (first time,).....Mozart.
2. Second Piano Trio, in C minor,.....Mendelssohn.
Messrs. DRESEL, A & W. FRIES.
- PART II.**
3. Andante Pastorale from Clarinet Concerto, No. 2,.....Cresel.
THOMAS RYAN.
4. Piano Solos.....Chopin—Mendelssohn.
OTTO DRESEL.
5. First Quintet, in E flat, op. 4,.....Beethoven.

The Quartet in G, which we never heard before, is a cheerful, genial, charming specimen of MOZART, alike admirable for scientific mastery of four-part development of themes, for pure, abstract quartet character, and for free spontaneous expression. If not one of the greatest, it is one of the most genuine, pleasing and wholesome fruits of his fine genius. It was beautifully played, with good accent, light and

shade, and smoothness in all the parts.—We have scarcely ever heard Mr. DRESEL to better advantage in a public effort. He played the MENDELSSOHN Trio with such fire and verve and delicacy, such expression and careful proportioning of all its lights and shades, and withal so *con amore*, that, well seconded as he was, the beauties of the work became more alive to us than ever before. He seemed more self-possessed and quiet in his strength than formerly. The light, fairy Scherzo, was exquisitely played.

The Andante for Clarinet was a charming bit of relief, short and sweet, not trivial, and played in a most rich, delicious tone, by Mr. RYAN. The smaller pieces selected by Mr. DRESEL were two which he was always fond of playing: the exquisite Adagio from one of CHOPIN's Concertos, which was again much admired, although we have heard him thrice through its flowery mazes with a finer delicacy of finger,—the reason being, doubtless, that the piano this time, being an exceedingly brilliant one for larger uses, was less suited to a soft and delicate touch;—secondly, the bright little "Spring Song" of Mendelssohn, which he has his own way, not an uninteresting one, of humoring. It was a rare treat to hear the poetry of the piano-forte again.

The Quintet of BEETHOVEN, of course, was glorious. It was a smoother performance than we have had in past years, but lacked perhaps a little more of fire,—or was it that the listening brain was dulled by long sitting in the furnace-heated room?

III. ARTISAN'S RECREATIVE UNION.—A severe storm on Wednesday deprived many hundreds of the pleasure and instruction of Mr. J. Q. WETHERBEE's historical illustrations of Operatic Melody. By the sprinkling of people in the Music Hall they were highly relished. The entertainment was partly lecture, partly song. But the spoken parts were merely brief connecting links, historical and critical, between the vocal illustrations, which covered, of course at rare intervals, the whole history of the Opera, from its origin about the year 1600 to the present day. Specimens were explained and sung, in the lecturer's rich and finely cultivated bass voice, from Monteverde, Galuppi, Handel, Sarti, Mozart, Weber, Rossini, Donizetti, Meyerbeer and Verdi. Of course, in one evening, and within the limits of a bass voice, there were more names left out than given. GLUCK especially seemed to demand a place.

We were sorry to lose the specimen from the first printed opera, by Monteverde. As we entered, the singer was in the midst of Handel's rousades, in which he is skilled. A sweet and quiet melody by Sarti was sung with chaste expression. But the comic song of Mozart's harem-keeper, from *Il Seraglio*, gave unusual delight and had to be repeated.—The dark song of Caspar from the *Freyschütz* contrasted well with Rossini's *Largo al factotum*. Of Verdi he sang a drinking song, new to us: *Mescelemi il vino*, and with fine effect. The piano accompaniments were by Mr. H. S. MAY. Mr. Wetherbee's pertinent and modest connecting remarks were in rather too colloquial a tone to be heard well in the great hall. We trust he will give our public further opportunities of learning a little of the history of music in so agreeable a way.

Need we remind our readers of the first ORCHESTRAL CONCERT in the Music Hall to-night? All the omens appear favorable. A richer programme or a completer orchestra we never had. One change has been necessitated in the vocal selections, owing to unexpected difficulty in procuring in season the orchestral parts for the duet from "Tell," before announced. It will be good, however, for another concert.....On Monday evening, the MUSICAL EDUCATION SOCIETY commence their annual series of five concerts in the Meionaeon. The programme, similar to those of the last two years, contains choruses from "Jephtha" and the "Messiah," with songs, duets, &c., by Mrs. HILL, Miss TIBBETTS, and Mr. ARTHURSON. Mr. ZERRAHN is their conductor, and MUELLER pianist. These concerts have proved very attractive. They will give the "Messiah" on Christmas night.....The "Messiah" is also to be given by the MENDELSSOHN CHORAL SOCIETY, who after vain negotiations with the other societies about a combined performance, have taken time by the forelock and selected Sunday evening, Dec. 9th, for the purpose. They have a capital quartet of solos in Miss ADELAIDE PHILLIPS, Mrs. LONG, Mr. ARTHURSON and Mr. WETHERBEE.

Advertisements.

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The Managing Committee respectfully announce to the musical public of Boston and vicinity, that the

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Conductor.....CARL ZERRAHN.

PROGRAMME.

Part I.

1. Symphony in A, (No. 7,).....Beethoven.
2. a. Recitative and Romanza from the second act of
"William Tell,".....Rossini.
b. Shakespeare's Serenade: "Hark! the Lark," Schubert.
Sung by Mrs. J. H. LONG.
3. Overture to "Tannhäuser,".....Richard Wagner.

Part II.

1. Concerto in G minor, for the Piano,.....Mendelssohn.
Played by OTTO DRESEL.
2. Cavatina from "Betty,".....Donizetti.
Sung by Mrs. J. H. LONG.
3. Overture to "Der Freyschütz,".....C. M. von Weber.

Tickets Fifty Cents each, to be obtained at the usual places.
Doors open at 6½. Commence at 7½ o'clock.

HANDEL AND HAYDN SOCIETY.

HANDEL'S ORATORIO, SOLOMON,

Will be repeated on SUNDAY EVENING, Nov. 25th, at the Music Hall, with the same vocal assistance as on the last Sunday evening.

CARL ZERRAHN, Conductor.....F. F. MUELLER, Organist.
Tickets 50 cents each—may be obtained at the principal Music Stores and Hotels.
Doors open at 6; to commence at 7 o'clock.

H. L. HAZELTON, Secretary.

MUSICAL EDUCATION SOCIETY.

CONCERT AT MEIONAEON,
MONDAY EVENING, NOV. 26th, at 8 o'clock.

CARL ZERRAHN, Conductor.....F. F. MUELLER, Pianist.
Selections from "Jephtha" and the "Messiah," with songs, &c., by Mrs. HILL, Miss H. P. TIBBETTS, and Mr. ARTHURSON.

The Second Concert of the Series of Five will be given on Monday evening, Dec. 10. The Third on Christmas evening, will consist of the rendering of the "Messiah" with orchestral accompaniment. Tickets of admission to the series, \$1; single tickets to concerts in the Meionaeon, 25 cents; to "Messiah" on Christmas night, 50 cents; for sale at the music stores and at the door.
WM. B. MERRILL, Secretary.

MENDELSSOHN CHORAL SOCIETY.

HANDEL'S "MESSIAH" will be performed on
SUNDAY EVENING, Dec. 9,
by the Mendelssohn Choral Society, at TREMONT TEMPLE.
The Society will be assisted by Miss ADELAIDE PHILLIPS, Mrs. J. H. LONG, Mr. A. ARTHURSON, and Mr. J. Q. WETHERBEE, Vocalists; Mr. W. B. BABCOCK, Organist, and a full Orchestra, Mr. H. ECKHARDT, Conductor.
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